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CHURCH UNION



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NEWS AND VIEWS

MAY 1957

The Negotiating Committee at Pachmarhi:
News and Impressions

NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

Organ of the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in
North India and Pakistan

No. 2

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An Acknowledgment

To all our friends, Churches, Christian educational institutions and Christian organisations, both in India and abroad, who have kindly sent us their letters of condolence on the passing of our beloved husband and father, the Very Rev. Dr. Augustine Ralla Ram, we send through the courtesy of this Paper, our heartfelt thanks. We write to assure them that their kind words of sympathy, tributes, and prayers have indeed sustained us a great deal during these dark and sorrowful days of our life.

Mrs. Angeline Ralla Ram, her sons
and daughter.

Jamna, Allahabad,
20th April 1957.

Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

Augustine Ralla Ram



"The Negotiating Committee, while recording its deep sense of loss in the death of its Secretary, the Very Reverend Augustine Ralla Ram, gives thanks and praise to God for Dr. Ralla Ram's life and particularly for his work for the reunion of the Church. Dr. Ralla Ram has been in the movement for reunion in North India since its beginning in 1929. He brought to it at all times great enthusiasm and brotherliness and a happy Christian impatience. Within his own Communion he was a keen advocate of union, and outside did much to produce the atmosphere of true ecumenical conversation between all. Later, as Secretary of the Negotiating Committee, he worked energetically and constantly, not sparing himself, in bringing the negotiations to the point they have reached. Therefore, for all these things, the Committee again gives thanks to God in whom we are and are to be one."

We send our deep sympathy and condolence to Mrs. Ralla Ram and her family, and pray for them God's blessing and the consolation of Christ."

—Resolution passed by the Negotiating Committee, on 3-4-57

"The Impatience of a Parson" was the name of an influential book published some thirty years ago. So far as Church Union was concerned, we had an impatient parson among us so long as Augustine Ralla Ram moved up and down the land. He was a happy warrior, eager interest awakened and fertile suggestions ready for every aspect of Church life, but through it all filled with a burning sense of the shame of Christian dis-

unity and a passion to bring it to an end. His was a holy impatience with all who could not see how that disunity was hampering the witness of the Gospel, and from him there went home to many a salutary rebuke for complacency and an awakening to the urgency of the need. He was well named the soul of the Church Union Movement.

His impatience at time led him to make strong speeches setting at naught the diffi-

culties that more cautious minds were seeing. But it was typical of his wise and generous mind that he rarely allowed such a protest to be his last word on the subject; instead he would listen to his colleagues, even with their difficulties, and, being sure that they shared his desire for the great end of unity, he would work hard with them to find the right solution. To a delegation which seemed to be finding difficulties too great, he would address his urgent appeal: "Do not leave us; we are lonely without you". That was his deep and sincere word; yet he was realist enough to know that real problems must have real solutions and was ready to have his impatience serve a creative patience which was sure that the Lord's hand was on this work.

Dr. Ralla Ram had severe things to say about the responsibility of western missionary societies which, with the Gospel, had brought to India their own heritage of denominational division. But he was never unfair in this judgement, for he knew well that it was not the fruit of a western missionary nature so much as of the frailty of human nature, and would say bluntly that if India had had the Gospel to itself it might well have outdone the west in denominationalism!

For this reason also, while he would urgently beg his western friends not to let their particular inheritance stand in the way of visible unity in India, he repudiated any narrowly national interpretation of Church or Gospel and firmly laid on his missionary friends their share in the duty of finding the answer to the problem of disunity within India. Similarly, a thought very dear to his heart, as he looked at Union accomplished in South India, and Union approaching in the North, was one of humble thanksgiving that God, who chose the weak things of this world, should apparently have chosen his country, with all its divisions, to be the scene of such major steps for the manifestation of the unity of Christ's Church.

None who knew Dr. Ralla Ram's contribution to the cause could ever accept the judgement that the Plan of Union for North India and Pakistan was a scheme imposed from outside. Today, as this great son of India and faithful servant of Christ has been called to higher service, the task remains on us who are here to carry on to a conclusion the work that he began, remembering his favourite text.

The King's Business Required Haste!

Appointments made by the Negotiating Committee:

The Negotiating Committee made the following appointments to ensure the carrying out of the essential work which remains to be done:

- (1) A *Working Committee* consisting of the Conveners of the seven delegations from the seven Negotiating Churches: Chairman: Rev. C. C. Pande, Bankura.
- (2) Secretary of the Negotiating Committee: The Ven. Archdeacon T. D. Sully, All Saints' House, 4 Queen's Road, Allahabad, U. P.
- (3) Sub-committee on Safeguarding of Trusts, etc.: Convener: Dr. E. C. Bhatt, Christian Council Lodge, Nagpur, B. S.
- (4) Sub-committee on Dioceses and Episcopal Support: Convener: Rev. Dr. K. Yohan Masih, Church House, Mhow, M. P.
- (5) Sub-committee on Problems concerning Baptism: Convener: Rev. B. F. Price, Serampore College, Serampore, W. B.

Editor of Church Union - News and Views

As the Editor, Rev. William Stewart, will be on leave out of India for about a year from June, 1957, the Negotiating Committee appointed Rev. B. F. Price, M. A., B. D. Serampore College, Serampore, West Bengal, to officiate as Editor during Mr. Stewart's absence. All communications for the Editor may therefore be addressed to Mr. Price until further notice.

N. B. Communications regarding subscriptions, etc., should continue to be addressed directly to the *Manager*: Rev. W. M. Ryburn, M. A., Litt. D., Theological College, Saharanpur, U. P.

The Plan of Union: Third Edition

Decisions at Pachmarhi

REV. WILLIAM STEWART

ON Saturday, April 6th, 1957, the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in North India and Pakistan, on the fourth day of its deliberations, adopted this resolution:

The Negotiating Committee resolved that the Plan of Church Union as amended, be approved for presentation to the governing bodies of the negotiating Churches in India, Pakistan and elsewhere for their decision.

The Committee further approved certain proposed orders of service to be used at the inauguration of Union and for ordinations in the Church after Union.

Members of the committee had in their hands proof copies of the Plan, through which they had steadily worked, approving and modifying amendments both minor and important. These changes have gone to the press and within a week or two the Third Edition of the Plan* will be available for all. The time has come for the negotiating churches to take their decision on what has been prepared through years of detailed work.

The Plan, as thus revised, now consists of two major parts, (i) a Constitution which, if approved, will be the Constitution of the United Church and (ii) a procedure for "the Inauguration of Union" together with necessary interim arrangements. The new form of the Plan has already been explained by the Rev. E. L. Wenger (see *Church Union-News and Views* for November 1956) and the Negotiating Committee unanimously agreed with the judgement that it is now a vastly simpler document to handle than it was in its earlier forms. Not only will the official English edition be soon available, but steps are being taken to see that it is also on sale shortly in the major languages of the area.

A heartening feature of the April meeting and of the Plan now put forward, is that for the first time Negotiating bodies number

seven instead of five. It is encouraging to those who have been negotiating for years to find that the Church of the Brethren and the Disciples of Christ, having studied the work already done, should have asked to enter the negotiations on that basis. Their participation widens the area represented in the proposed United Church and will make the Union much more real in those parts of India in which they are at work.

NORTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN

An important development which reached a climax at the April meeting concerned future relations between the Church in North India and in Pakistan. The original intention was to constitute one Church organisation for the whole area, but it had become increasingly clear that there would be formidable difficulties to which a proposal for a General and Regional Synods would provide no adequate solution. Meantime hard work was done on the problem, especially in Pakistan, and new proposals were at Pachmarhi cordially accepted by all.

It is now agreed that negotiations should continue for both countries till a single Plan of Union is accepted. On this basis, however, there will then be constituted two *autonomous Churches*, the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan. These, being formed from the same parent bodies and having a common constitution, will be in full communion with each other. Inauguration of the Union will take place at two separate services held respectively in the two countries. Representatives of the Church in both countries will be present at each of these, and the "Bringing Together" of the Methodist and the Anglican episcopates will take place for all in the service to be held in India.

It was further agreed that to maintain relations between the two Churches each should set up a permanent liaison committee to keep one another informed of all developments affecting Constitution or Faith and Order, and where necessary, to arrange for

*"Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan", Third Edition 1957. Published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras. Price Re. 1.

joint conferences where such developments might affect mutual relations. In addition, the desire has been recorded to maintain relations of full communion and fellowship, which may be expressed through a regular conference, with the Church of South India and the Church of Lanka as well as any other Churches which may be the fruit of unions of a similar character.

SOME IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

Some major matters which had remained unresolved were dealt with by the Negotiating Committee. We can only briefly indicate some of these:

a. **Bringing together the Episcopates:** That two different episcopates, the Anglican and the Methodist, are involved, has given rise to problems. These did not only affect the episcopal churches, for proposals to unify them inevitably reacted on the non-episcopal churches too. From 1955 it was proposed that a "Bringing Together of the Episcopates" should take place in the Inaugural service before the Unification of the Ministry. This was a reversal of the order proposed in 1953 and aroused sharp criticism in some quarters. The Baptist protest was against the anomaly of a situation in which, just after the declaration of union, two of the uniting churches should carry through an act concerning themselves alone, with the others as mere spectators. The UCNI protest was based on the interpretation that the act was intended to "provide the episcopate for the united Church". Since a Church like the UCNI has steadily held that the episcopate has been corporately exercised within it, this clearly could not be acceptable.

Before the meeting, progress had been made to clear up misunderstandings and to meet criticism. Publication of the full proposals of the Continuation Committee, with a commentary on these by Bishop Lash (*Church Union, News and Views*, Feb. 1957) showed that provision of the episcopate for the united Church would take place only through the Unification of the Ministry and the later appointment of bishops for the united Church. For these Steps (3 and 4) the bringing together of the episcopates (Step 2) would be a mere, though necessary, preliminary. Further, alterations in the proposed form of service to ensure that other ministers of the united Church would participate made it

clear that the act would be one of the United Church and this met the Baptist criticism.

The UCNI delegation would still have preferred to see the whole matter covered in one act by suitable amendment of the procedure for the Unification of the Ministry. They recognised however that no point of fresh principle was now involved and that a simple return to the 1953 proposal was not possible and therefore did not finally press any objection. It would be right to say that the consensus of opinion was that the procedure as now modified represents a distinct improvement on what was earlier proposed.

b. **Unification of the Ministry:** The Committee unanimously accepted a revised procedure for the act of "Unification". In the original proposal each group of ministers would in turn receive a commission with the laying on of hands by representative ministers of all other uniting churches. This procedure seemed to minimise the significance of the actual Union which would have taken place at the beginning of the service, and seemed to stress unduly the separate character of different contributions to be given. Under the proposal now adopted nothing of principle is changed, but the service will be simpler and unity will be more clearly expressed. The new arrangement is that at the beginning of the act three ministers, chosen beforehand and including one Bishop, will receive the laying on of hands with the appropriate words, from representative ministers of all the Churches now united. Thereafter, as fully commissioned ministers of the United Church, these three will officiate for all the other ministers present who will participate. This procedure will more clearly emphasise the element of humble waiting on God in prayer, and will avoid the impression that the emphasis rests on the idea of a series of separate contributions of grace which might be thought of as being the possession of the uniting bodies.

c. **The Elder and the Session:** The UCNI was uneasy about the degree of recognition granted in the Plan to the eldership and the Session. It had been agreed that diversity should continue below the organisational level of the diocesan council. While this was accepted by all, a Church which believed that one of its most valued insights concerned the nature of the spiritual office of its lay elders and their corporate responsibility along

with the ordained minister, could not but feel uneasy at an apparent tendency merely to equate this with quite different local arrangements which did not contain the same principles. No request was pressed that the presbyterian eldership should be imposed on the whole United Church, but happily a greater degree of recognition of it was found possible by the addition of a reference to the part played, by those who will be chosen and commissioned for the corresponding spiritual office, in public worship, including Holy Communion.

d. The Congregation: In his article in this issue the Rev. E. L. Wenger explains the Baptist concern that more adequate recognition should be given to the place of the congregation. Here again a mere statement that local arrangements will not be disturbed is clearly inadequate since in a church of congregational polity the congregation has held final authority. Any union which introduces another authority clearly affects fundamentally the position of such a local church. This particular fact cannot be evaded, but the Negotiating Committee found itself able to provide for a more meaningful appropriation of the "congregational" element by making specific the duty of each congregation to meet at least once a year and to discharge certain administrative functions.

e. Polity and Autonomy: Two notable additions were made to the Plan. First, in the paragraph on Polity acceptance of a Baptist proposal has led to a clear founding of this matter on recognition of the Lordship of Christ. The wording is as follows:

1. The Church of North India/Pakistan affirms that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of the Church.
2. The Church of North India/Pakistan accepts the presbyteral, congregational and episcopal elements in Church order, as the means through which the lordship of Christ in His Church may be realised, and as necessarily involved in its polity. . . .

Secondly, in place of a previous bald assertion of the Church's claim to spiritual autonomy, a fuller statement has now been adopted which firmly anchors this claim to fundamental Christian truth and then proceeds, for the benefit both of members of the Church and others, to indicate the kind

of sphere in which "spiritual autonomy" may legitimately be claimed.

FURTHER WORK

Though the Plan as such is complete, many practical matters remain to be dealt with, some of which may affect Church decisions:

a. Diocesan Arrangements: The Committee again had before it a set of proposals for the number and boundaries of the future dioceses as well as for episcopal support. These proposals, for some 30 diocesan areas in India and 5 in Pakistan, commended themselves to the committee as forming a good basis for further work. Nevertheless, the proposals are clearly not final. In some areas there have been valuable conferences of representatives of the churches concerned and their proposals were very helpful. In many other areas no such work has yet been done. Plainly no central committee can do a satisfactory job for the whole territory unless it has the considered advice of those who will be directly concerned with the Church in each area. Accordingly, the proposals will now be published as tentative plans and the urgent request is repeated that in each area conferences be held on this matter so as to construct, on the basis of what has been drafted, a more satisfactory plan for the whole Church.

b. Legal Continuity and related Matters: Here again an interim report contained much valuable suggestion and guidance for the churches. At the same time the Negotiating Committee has sought to impress on all the great importance of steps being taken to ensure that the decisions to enter union will be legally correct, leaving no heritage of litigation for the Church after Union. Besides, much has still to be done regarding the pattern of Church/Mission Integration and to safeguard the economic assets of the Churches.

c. Continuation Committee: The hour of decision has come and the Negotiating Committee as a whole has finished its work. Nevertheless it was clear to all that there remain many matters on which much will depend on how exactly practical solutions are found to bridge the difficulties of transition. Interim arrangements must be made in some places for the administration of the Sacraments, problems of conscientious difficulty

may arise, it is agreed that a glossary of terms should be provided with the Plan, arrangements must be made for spreading knowledge of the plan. For all such matters the Committee once more appointed and empowered its Continuation Committee for the next period.

A PLAN—COMPLETE BUT STILL IMPERFECT

No one at the Pachmarhi meeting thought that anything would be gained by further postponement to provide for still more revision in later meetings. The dominant conviction was that the time had come for action, that there now was a Plan on which the Churches must decide. Even the process of decision will take time and our eyes are fixed on the year 1961 as the year of possible Union. Though that is still four years ahead, they will be years of intensive study and prayer that the union may be a reality.

This does not mean that the members of the Committee were satisfied that they had a Plan perfect in every detail. Probably there was not one delegation which was fully satisfied, and misgivings may have gone deeper in some hearts than in others. But this is itself one consequence of our long disunion, and the way to a more perfect Constitution lies open only within union itself. Even so, when those matters were discussed on which it became clear that there was greater sensitivity in one group or an-

other, the Negotiating Committee made provision that during the period still ahead of us, groups of persons should go on working for fuller understanding and possible practical measures to make it easier to come together. This process will not end with the act of union but, beginning now, may well go on more hopefully afterwards.

But there was one other thought which more and more seemed to grip the minds of those concerned with this work. This was the thought: "What is the alternative? Can we now conceivably agree not to unite?" Granted that the scheme is still imperfect, can anyone with equanimity contemplate the possibility that these bodies, after their years of approaching one another, should now finally throw it all up and turn aside again? We have a Master who continually calls His people to an alert and eager concern for His service, the service of His Gospel in a divided and needy world. Can we reconcile our obedience to Him with a willingness each to raise once more a separate banner and proclaim in this divided world that we too are divided? Truly we do not know what lies in store for us if we commit ourselves in union to fellowship with those from whom we have been so long divided. But equally truly, if we have recognised that these also belong to our one Lord and Master, we shall meet them in high confidence. In Christ we are not divided, and we have His promise that where we come together in His name He shall be in the midst.

How Large a Diocese?

".....in almost all the dioceses in England the Bishop has to be helped out by one or more Suffragan or Assistant Bishops, who are appointed quite frankly and openly as auxiliary instruments of the "real" bishop!

Obviously there is something wrong here. When a Bishop finds that he cannot confirm all his own children, or institute (perhaps even ordain) all his own Presbyters into the curia which they are to hold from him, it surely means that he is failing in the primary purpose of his office. For these functions, instrumental in that they can be delegated, afford also just those special opportunities of personal Ministry which Bishop still retains. It is by his presence on these occasions that the man becomes known and loved..... and neither love nor knowledge will grow out of brief and irregular appearances, or the ministry of a substitute whose own the sheep are not. Thus, the Bishop today, with the best will in the world confessedly in an impossible position."

from Phythian-Adams: "The Way of At-one-ment"

Pachmarhi—An Impression

PROBHUDAN ADHIKARI

THE Negotiating Committee for Church Union in North India and Pakistan met at Pachmarhi, the famous hill-station in Madhya Pradesh to finalise the Draft Plan for Church Union from April 3rd to 6th last. Six representatives from each of the seven Negotiating Church bodies of North India together with one observer attended the Conference.

The representatives met with a full sense of responsibility, fully conscious of the extremely important, but none-the-less difficult, task they were asked to perform for there they were gathered to lay the basis and foundation of the bigger United Church of Christ in North India. Some solid work was done in course of the 4 days and in spite of a few hurdles here and there, it was possible ultimately to have an agreed Plan in final form.

As a layman attending the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in North India for the first time, I cannot help writing frankly about one or two of my sad impressions. The Negotiating Committee is overlaid with missionaries (as distinguished from laymen) — mostly foreigners. Indians are, of course, well represented but the important point is that they are neither vocal nor do they seem to be very actively interested.

The Negotiating Committee and the Round Table Conferences have never included representatives of youth or women. It has been exclusively an affair of the theologians — whereas Church Union should be a reality for all Christians and not only for the scholars. It has been said by critics of the Plan "that the present Church Union movement is entirely mission-inspired and another imposition on the future Church of India." Leaders or Conveners of delegations are mostly foreign missionaries and it was really unfortunate to hear all the time references to "Home Committees", "Home Boards" or "Lambeth" etc. It was unfortunate that throughout the discussions our missionary friends from abroad should have insisted that paras or wordings of the Plan should be altered or revised in such and such form or manner, otherwise they could not expect their "Home Boards" to accept the same.

We were discussing a Plan for Union of Indian Churches and of Indian Christians and I submit that our Unity is not certainly dependant on any foreign influence or approval of any foreign body. It was not until we arrived at Pipariya Railway Station on our journey back from Pachmarhi after the conclusion of the Conference that I overheard a conversation between two delegates—a very influential member of a certain delegation (a foreign missionary) enquiring of another delegate (an Indian) if the Plan satisfied Indian opinion! I wish this realisation had guided us in the Conference room itself:

Then again the discussion and decisions on certain problems seemed to be based on certain assumptions and expectations which may or may not happen e.g. in our discussion on "Episcopal Support and Dioceses" we were possibly assuming that foreign funds would continue to flow in future as before. This, to my mind, is neither a wise nor a sound assumption:

There was also the concern in the minds of delegates of certain church bodies that in their anxiety for a United Church, they were really giving up too much of their fundamentals, whereas one or two other delegations were constantly referring to what certain higher church bodies in England or elsewhere would say and would like the other delegations to give in to all their demands. Some felt that there should have been a real spirit of "give and take" and that these delegations should also have realised the genuine difficulties of other churches in respect of their genuinely held "convictions" or "conscientious beliefs" and "age-old practices".

The morning and evening devotions were very ably conducted and the leaders all laid stress on our fundamental Unity in Christ.

Arrangements for hospitality were excellent. The delegates were accommodated in four nice Bungalows. The climate of Pachmarhi was also very congenial to the important discussions of the Conference. The afternoon of the fourth day of the Conference was spent in sight-seeing in and around Pachmarhi.

May we hope and pray that the discussions at the Pachmarhi Conference will bear fruit and that under God's guidance the Church in North India will be united before long.

(Editor's Note: We believe that Mr. Adhikari's brotherly protest should be taken to heart by all those from overseas who have a share in Church Union work. We also believe that Mr. Adhikari will be the first to recognise that it is their own churches which have appointed these missionaries to represent them in the negotiations, and that many of them, through long years of service in the Church in these countries, feel them-

selves to be wholly identified with it in its life and work. That the negotiations are bound to involve theological problems is a fact of the nature of this undertaking; but it is a serious failure on the part of the theologians if others are left unable to see either the meaning or the relevance of the contribution which they bring to their solution.

That the problem is not overlooked by the Negotiating Committee may be inferred from the fact that of the four sub-committees which were set up to carry on essential work at this stage, three were entrusted to national conveners.

"The People had a Mind to Work"

REV. W. G. YOUNG

A WELL-KNOWN Scottish evangelist once said that Christian fellowship is deeper if we are doing things together, not just discussing things, and deepest of all if we are suffering together. I think that is why a meeting of the Negotiating Committee—and especially one's first one—is such a moving experience. For the Committee doesn't just talk; it does things—even if these are matters of words put down on paper; and at times, when denominational differences produce problems that seem to have no solution, there is an acute sense of suffering. All this I have felt this week at Pachmarhi, and I am grateful that I had the privilege of being there.

One impression is of industry—I have not met a Committee that worked harder; or more systematically. There was a "mind to the work" and night after night small sub-committees met to thrash out problems or draft amendments. We are working with a definite aim, to complete the Plan in its final form before mid-day on Saturday, 6th April, so that it could be printed and sent to the churches for a decision. We did have an eye on the clock, and yet there was no sense of reckless hurry; everything that needed discussion got adequate time, either in the Committee, or in a sub-committee, and no one was prevented from expressing his opinion freely.

One was struck by the competence of the negotiators, whether Indian, Pakistani, British or American. It is true that one or two of the overseas brethren talked a lot (and to the purpose) but they did not by any means monopolise the discussion, and everyone who spoke, spoke to the point. Our Chairman, Dr. E. C. Bhatt, was excellent at steering us again and again to a business-like solution.

There was a wonderful "will to unite" in all that was said, whether in worship, in discussion, or in drafting. One could feel that everyone there shared on the one hand a sense of our present spiritual oneness and zealous urgency that we should be visibly one. Where a Church's representative had to say, "My Church could not possibly accept this", it was said bluntly and frankly and the Committee sought for a solution elsewhere. But again and again matters which might have been stumbling-blocks to some were removed because of the readiness of their brethren to give way on matters which they had felt to be desirable, but not essential.

At times there were moments of tension when one delegation or another felt that they were not understood, or their objection given due weight, but any who had been misunderstood, or thoughtless, hastened to humble themselves, and one felt at such moments a real spirit of prayerful concern.

We were not always serious, by any means. There was much cheerful leg-pulling and wisecracking, and many bursts of merriment, which certainly increased our affection for one another, and our sense of "togetherness". The decision to have separate churches for North India and for Pakistan was almost drowned in a good-humoured volley of oblique strokes and asterisks! (*Editor's Note*: The new edition of the Plan will refer to the names of the churches by the words; duly explained in an appropriate footnote: The Church of North India/Pakistan). Baptists

and Bishops, Professors and Punctuation, all provided useful targets. Of course some of the members, like William Bombay and Hugh Baikie, were outstanding in their contributions to the fun.

It is a pity that more people could not have been there—not to speak, but to see and to realise something of the atmosphere. I do not think there could be a more potent force, under God, for the conversion of doubters to a realisation of the urgency and the need for union than seeing the Committee at work and sharing in its prayers and endeavours.

The Office of a Bishop

THE RIGHT REVEREND R. W. BRYAN BISHOP OF BARRACKPORE

TO produce "an informative and constructive article on how the episcopal office functions in practice within the life of the Church" is not easy. To do it at all adequately within a compass of 1500 words is almost impossible. The best way to satisfy such a query would be to give a picture of the life and work of a particular bishop, like Bishop Newbiggin's *South India Diary*.

The one single phrase which above all others embodies our ideal of a bishop is "a father in God", but the practical application of that ideal is not easy to describe in a few paragraphs. Instead of attempting it, I shall try to outline our conception of the office of a bishop in the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon—what sort of a man he should be, what work he should do, and what kind of life he should lead. If it does not always work out so in practice—as of course it never does perfectly—that is due, not to a faulty conception of the episcopal office, but to the human frailty of us who fill it.

Constitutional As Well As Historic

At an ecumenical gathering at which I was present recently, one of the speakers made a distinction between the bishops of our Church, as representing the historic episcopate, and a bishop of another Church, as representing the constitutional episcopate. Probably this was meant in fun, but it is the sort of ill-informed and misleading statement which does

real harm. We certainly claim to have the historic episcopate in our Church, but equally certainly it is a constitutional episcopate also.

Our Constitution, Canons and Rules define quite clearly the functions and authority of bishops and their place in the Church, and provide rules which govern in detail their election, consecration, enthronement, residence, resignation, and discipline. In addition, each fully organised diocese has its own Constitution and Rules, and the bishop must exercise his functions in accordance with these provisions. Very considerable authority indeed vests in the Diocesan Council, in which the clergy and elected lay people sit with the bishop; and there are provisions for appeal to the Metropolitan and the Courts of the General Council if the bishop should conduct himself either unworthily or unconstitutionally.

Neither Lords Nor Lordly

In England all bishops of the Anglican Church are addressed by the spiritual title "Lord" and it was usual to accord to colonial bishops also the courtesy title of Lord Bishop. This usage still lingers on in the C. I. P. B. C., and I think there are those of a strongly Anglo-Catholic way of thinking to whom it is a matter of conviction to give the title "Lord" to their bishop, as recognising his spiritual status; but it does give rise to misunderstanding among both Free Church Christians and non-Christians. I believe I speak for the Indian bishops in general when

I say that I prefer not to be known as the Lord Bishop and that experience has taught me that when a local Christian addresses me as "My Lord" it usually means that he has a complaint to make or a grievance against me.

As to whether we are lordly in our ways and in our standard of living, it is hardly for me to say, but I do not think it is easy to be lordly on a salary of Rs. 400 a month. Some of the older bishoprics are endowed or otherwise provided with funds to give the bishop a larger salary than that, but that is approximately the standard of the newer dioceses. A sumptuary (or hospitality) allowance of about Rs. 100 a month and a travelling allowance of about Rs. 200 a month are added; but speaking from my own experience I can say that these do not altogether cover my expenses under those two heads. I do not know how a married bishop with a number of children to educate would manage in my place, for there are no funds available for any allowance of any sort beyond the two I have mentioned.

I do not give these details by way of complaint—far from it, for it was I who had the chief say in fixing the emoluments of the bishop of this newest of our dioceses—but because many people have an altogether distorted and erroneous idea of the salaries which our bishops receive.

Ideals And Requirements

The service for the Consecration of a Bishop gives us a good picture of the episcopal office. There is emphasis first on fitness of character and holiness of life, and secondly on learning and ability and readiness to spread abroad the Gospel "the glad tidings of reconciliation" with God.

You will notice throughout how much of the service is based on Scripture and how much stress is laid on the study and teaching of the Bible. The climax of this is the solemn delivery of a Bible to the newly consecrated bishop. I must ask you to read in full for yourself the five passages from the New Testament which provide a choice of Epistle and Gospel:—

1 Timothy	3: 1-7
Acts	20: 17-35
John	21: 15-17
John	20: 19-23
Matthew	28: 18-20

Next we take the questions put to the bishop-elect, and they are perhaps the most convenient outline of what the Church requires of her bishops. Their purport may be summarized thus:—

- (1) Do you believe that you are truly called to this office?
- (2) Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine necessary to eternal salvation, and will you teach accordingly?
- (3) Will you study the Scriptures faithfully and with prayer?
- (4) Will you diligently combat all erroneous doctrine contrary to the Scriptures?
- (5) Will you set the example of a sober, righteous and godly life?
- (6) Will you maintain and set forward quietness, love and peace among all men, and correct and punish the sinful and disobedient?
- (7) Will you be diligent in evangelism and in encouraging your priests and people in the same duty?
- (8) Will you be faithful in ordaining the clergy?
- (9) Will you be gentle and merciful towards the poor and needy?

The bishops, we see, are to be on the one hand patterns of good living, and on the other the overseers of the Church and the guardians of her faith (of Acts 20: 28). Something of the same double requirement is suggested by the phrase "father in God". A good father must not only have affection for his children and live so as to earn both their love and respect; he must also rule them wisely and firmly, and be competent to see to their welfare and proper training.

Christ's Under-Shepherd

The Prayer Book, following the imagery of Scripture, also speaks of the bishop and his people under the beautiful and suggestive figure of a shepherd and his flock. We can study this concept in such great passages as Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, John 10, and the parable of the Lost Sheep.

The sentimental and effeminate shepherd portrayed in many religious pictures is wide of the mark. The shepherd is a strong virile

figure, the embodiment of courage, resource and hardy manhood; yet his love and care for his sheep are unbounded, and he can be very gentle with them. The shepherd walking ahead of his sheep suggests the primary importance of the bishop's example of a holy life. But the shepherd must do more than just walk in front of his flock. He must be competent to guide them to good pasture, to deal with their hurts and ailments, to search for and recover those that get lost, to ward off attacks from other creatures, and generally to provide for his flock's welfare.

As the newly-consecrated bishop is handed his pastoral staff to remind him that he is to be one of Christ's under-shepherds, his pastoral duty is set out in these lovely words: "Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost. Be so merciful, that thou be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that thou forget not mercy".

The Personal Touch

William Temple in his *Readings in St. John's Gospel* has a fine comment on John 10: 11, "I am the good shepherd". I should

like to quote the passage in full for the light which it sheds on the pastoral office, but I will content myself with one paragraph which serves to introduce the last point I wish to make. He says, "The true shepherd not only cares for the sheep with a devotion even to the death; but he knows them and is known by them. This is the secret of all true pastoral work; it is achieved through personal acquaintance. The shepherd 'callesth his own sheep by name'; he knows their qualities; he can pray for each intelligently; he can offer appropriate guidance. And 'the sheep hear his voice'—something in them responds to the call which his knowledge of them enables him to utter so as to reach their souls."

The ideal here put before us is one to which no bishop will find it easy to attain. With the immense dioceses which were the general rule in our Church some decades ago, it must have been quite impossible. It is the need for having dioceses of such a size that the bishops may reasonably hope to discharge their pastoral duties adequately which has been the chief factor in moving us to subdivide some of the larger sees. There are now sixteen dioceses where there were only nine when I came to Calcutta 35 years ago.

Taking Counsel Together

REV. KENNETH YOHAN MASIH, D. D.

"**T**AKING Counsel Together" describes in three words the polity of the United Church of Northern India. Like others of the Reformed family the order of Church government is conciliar, that is brethren meeting together in Church courts at various levels, and taking counsel.

In this brief article, I shall not attempt to give the theory or practice as such, of Reformed Church Government, neither will I attempt to quote chapter and verse to prove the scriptural basis, for no one will deny the scriptural foundation of the polity we follow.

In the past nine years, as a very small servant of the Church, I have been privileged to see the advantages and, yes, some short-comings, in our polity and it will be those, practical things that I should bring to the attention of the readers.

The Preface to the Revised Edition of the U.C.N.I. Constitution, commonly called "The Blue Book", has the following sentence: The distinctive features of this Church are first that its doctrines are trinitarian and evangelical, second that its form of Church Government is representative and democratic in character, and third that by its gradation of courts (namely the Session, the Church Council, the Synod and the General Assembly provision is made for the good government of the Church in things spiritual, the preservation of the rights of its members and the maintenance of good discipline".

How it Works

From a local congregation right up to the General Assembly they take counsel together and thus in a corporate act, they try to find God's will for His Church.

The first court of the Church is the Session (of a local organised congregation). Each congregation according to its numerical strength elects a certain number of lay people, who are then set apart as Elders. These elders, along with the Minister, form the Session. In all matters pertaining to that congregation or to the Church as such, discussion takes place and action is taken by the Session.

A number of congregations are then grouped under the next court of the Church, the Church Council. Each Session sends its lay representatives to this court on a proportional basis, all ministers living within the bounds of the Church Council being members. Here again the emphasis is on brethren taking counsel together.

A number of Church Councils, three or five or more (on the basis of area or language) are grouped under the next higher court, namely the Synod. Church Councils send their representatives both lay and ministerial on a basis fixed in the Constitution. This court again is a place for taking counsel together. Finally the supreme court is the General Assembly.

(Note: In the U.C.N.I., in round figures, there are 400,000 members, to be found in over 2,000 congregations which are grouped in 26 Church Councils. These are under 7 Synods and there is one General Assembly. Any member of the U.C.N.I. has the right of appeal right up to the General Assembly).

Since the order of Church Government is democratic and representative it of necessity has certain shortcomings, for to reach the ideal is not easy. It calls for a deepening of spiritual life in the Church and a greater consecration of its members. Where these are not found one ordinarily runs up against difficulties and disadvantages.

Disadvantages.

1. When a large number of people unite together in bearing a responsibility there is a danger that some of them will fail to realise and appreciate what such a joint responsibility involves. Some of them would give their consent or agree to things light-heartedly, without fully comprehending the seriousness of decisions taken, which probably they might never have taken if they were individually going to bear the responsibility for such a decision. They are

then led to take shelter under the excuse that such and such a decision was that of the Session or some other court and they individually therefore cannot be blamed for the consequences or called to task for it.

2. Another shortcoming of the Polity we have is that sometimes there is long delay in taking an action or decision, because large bodies cannot meet too frequently to act quickly. This can be largely obviated if the Secretary of the Church Court concerned is an active person.

3. When Fathers and Brethren take counsel together one finds sometimes a heavy bias towards conservatism. It is hard at times to get a Church Court to act on a bold or original progressive proposal. They are too cautious. In rare cases one notices the feeling and spirit of "What was good for my father or in the past is good enough, why try a new thing?"

4. One more disadvantage is not peculiar to this system only. It is that of lobbying, wire pulling and the creation of factions or parties. This evil, of course, is contrary to the very meaning of the Church's fellowship and can defeat the very purpose for which we take counsel together.

Advantages

1. Church Government based on the Conciliar system, if properly practised, encourages each local group of worshippers to realise its share in the responsibilities for the unfinished task of the Church, particularly on the local and Church Council levels and out from these to the work of the Church as a whole, including, for example, the Overseas Mission of the U.C.N.I. It helps members to take their part intelligently and with understanding. Thus they are also encouraged to pray and give with cheerfulness for the various causes of the Church on all levels.

2. The democratic and representative form of Church Courts ensures representation of every part of the Church in the governing bodies. The Elders who form the Sessions are elected by the congregation. In the Church Council members represent all the congregations within their bounds and so on. Thus for every Church member there is provided a suitable channel through which his views and wishes can be made known in the various Church Courts.

3. There is the absence of any hierarchy of individual officers, which lessens the danger of personal ambition being the motivating force among the servants of the Church. The Moderator, be he of a Church Council, a Synod, or even of the General Assembly, is always first among equals. Moreover, all offices in the various Church Courts are held for a limited term only. Certainly persons may be re-elected or re-appointed, but the system helps these officials to remember their responsibility to act as servants of Christ and of His Church, and never as "managers" or directors in their own right.

4. The conciliar order guards at every level against the danger of concentrating too much power in the hands of any one individual, who might be tempted to become either a dictator or a big boss!

5. Finally, taking counsel together at various levels affords regular opportunity

for full and frank discussion of every important matter. The Courts cannot become merely rubber stamping machines for an individual or even a group. Corporate thinking and planning helps the entire group to be an active participant and God does reveal His will in a special way to a group which prays and sincerely discusses its problems in the atmosphere of prayer. This does not mean that unwise decisions may not sometimes be made, but such decisions are less likely when they are approached in this way, and the graded system of courts of the Church is a guard against the continuance of a wrong decision.

It is some of these things which are of distinctive advantage that we hope and pray will not be lost sight of when the wider union leads to the inauguration of the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan.

UNITY IN CHRIST

"He who gave us life told us how to pray...First of all, the Teacher of unity and peace.. did not wish each one to pray only for himself. We have a public and common prayer. When we pray, it is not for one person but for the whole people, because we all are one. God taught us peace, concord and unity: He bore us all in one Person; and he desire each one to pray for all."

ST. CYPRIAN, on the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus says: "I am the Way you must travel.
I am the Truth to which you must come,
I am the Life in which you must remain.
I am the Way without error,
I am the Truth without falsehood,
I am the Life without death"

ST. BERNARD.

Therefore: Let us enter on this Way,
Let us hold this Truth,
Let us lead this Life.

ST. AMBROSE.

From the call to the week of Prayer for Christian Unity issued by the Commission on Youth and order of the World Council of Churches.

Some Practical Issues

REV. E. L. WENGER

THE problem of the Ministry still holds first place in the field of Church Union discussion (alas that the Ministry and the Lord's Supper should be problems!) but the questions that crop up mostly in Baptist circles are quite different. The theological problems of the nature of membership in the Church and of the principles of Baptism have been and are still being discussed by the Negotiating Committee, but anxiety is expressed with regard to the "polity" problem of the degree of autonomy of the local church and its practical implications, to which less attention has been given in the Negotiating Committee.

Central Authority and the Local Church

It is natural that Churches whose organisation and polity is centralised should spend much time and thought on trying to blend together the different traditions and forms of these centralised organisations, whether episcopal, presbyteral or methodist: but for Churches whose tradition is congregational, and who, in theory at least all their central organisation no authority except the power of giving advice, the question of how the local congregation will come out of the negotiations is of critical importance. To many provisions such as "the laity shall have a share in the process..." (IX.11) and every pastorate "may also make recommendations as to the appointment of its pastor" (XI. 2) seem unsatisfactorily vague.

There are two specific answers that can be given which should lessen these anxieties: First is the rule in the Interim Arrangements (Part II. VI) that "in matters or organisation below the level of Diocesan Councils...the existing forms of local organisation may continue to function for this (interim) period provided they do not conflict with the Constitution of the Church or the accepted powers and functions of the Ministry..." and that "legislation which would have the effect of altering organisation below the level of the Diocesan Council shall not be applied without the consent of the organisation concerned..." and similar provisions.

Second is the principle that the United Church envisages some variety in local or-

ganisation even after the interim period. We may hope that locally organised congregations will begin to see one another's methods of conducting business, not as the method of a rival body which must therefore be eschewed at all costs and its defects sneered at in order to show off one's own virtues, but as the method of another congregation within the one fellowship whose good points may be considered and adopted for oneself while one tries to overcome the defects of one's own organisation. In this way a local organisation may be developed which will be better suited to the needs, spiritual and other, of the congregation, by making use of past traditions without necessarily being bound to them with a misplaced loyalty.

There will then continue to be considerable variety, not so much as the product of past traditions, but as meeting the divergent needs of the different situations. We may well suppose that the organisation best suited to the needs of a rapidly increasing church in a "forward area" where Christians form a large proportion of the total population, will be different from that suited to a congregation which is isolated amid a population that is thoroughly indifferent or even antagonistic to the Christian message. Such variety in organisation, both of local congregations and of diocesan councils, is good, and is manifestly in line with Baptist traditions of local autonomy.

The Need to Plan Now

But while these answers are valid and will lessen fears and misunderstandings about the future, Baptists may reasonably ask the other churches to give more attention to these issues. Granted that the final definition of diocesan boundaries cannot be made until we know what churches will enter the Union, granted that discussions on local organisation should be taken up at diocesan levels, is it not possible to give some lead on these matters? There is a fear lest the tendency will be towards centralisation and towards reducing the influence of the laity.

At the Pachmarhi meeting Baptists pressed for further consideration on these matters before the Plan was put into final shape.

Certain amendments were agreed to, which have greater significance than may at first sight appear. In XI. 2, the paragraph is to have a heading: "The Powers and Duties of the Pastorate", similar to those, as amended, in XI. 6 and 9, thereby stressing the importance of the Pastorate. In the same paragraph the addition after "every pastorate" of the words, "according to its constitution or practice" again calls attention to the fact that the government of the pastorate is not dictated from above. The pastorate is to meet "at least once a year" (but there is nothing to prevent a local congregation meeting more frequently if its own constitution requires it), and the "purposes" of the meeting are now made more explicit as including elections to the Pastorate Committee (or equivalent body) and "such administrative or other purposes as are or shall be defined by the Constitution" (XI. 3). In the Diocesan Council the number of lay representatives is to be not less than the number of ordained members (XI. 5 (d)).

Two things are still needed. One is an adjustment of outlook that recognises that the "grass-roots" of Church Union concern how two or more local congregations can cease to be rivals and show the meaning of reconciliation in their "union". We are told that the Unification of the Ministry by the mutual laying on of hands is in order to "transmit the different traditions" to one another. But Baptist traditions cannot be so transmitted. The Baptist tradition is the tradition of the individual believer, of the spiritual authority of the local church, and of the pastor whose call from God is recognised by the church which calls him to serve them. The only form of transmission of such traditions is in a corporate living together in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Great attention has been given to the means by which other traditions may be transmitted through an initial service of unification: is it not time to give attention to the means by

which these other traditions (and they are not, of course, confined to Baptists!) may be transmitted and blended.

The other thing needed, therefore, is some consideration of practical problems. It is too late now, even if it were desirable, to lay down in the Plan how the Diocesan Councils should set to work in trying to bring together the different forms of local organisation. But area conferences could surely be held to discuss what form the Diocesan Council shall take. A model constitution for all dioceses is probably undesirable, for these constitutions should be a living development from the constitutions already existing in the churches uniting in any one area: but if a Diocesan Council is going to work after union, we need to know more of how our sister churches are working already in organisations of the corresponding size.

The meeting of the Comity Committee in the Twenty-Four Parganas District in West Bengal is a significant attempt to get together the representatives of churches at the local level. Perhaps one or two such districts may be treated as "pilot projects" and be requested to give special attention to the practical details of union of local congregations, so that their conclusions may be tentatively adopted for the whole field. I suppose that Baptists ought, in view of their claims, to give a lead in this: my plea is that other churches shall also give greater recognition to its importance.

It is sometimes noted that leadership in Church Union discussions is still largely with the missionaries and with theologians. May not Indian participation in the negotiation be stimulated and widened when Church Union issues are seen not to belong only to remote realms of episcopal or presbyteral ordination but to the issue—very mundane yet fraught with big spiritual possibilities—How will one congregation made up of former congregations of different traditions in one village, manage its own affairs?

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situation as compared with European countries which obtains in a country like India, where no denomination is justified in regarding itself as the Church.

These remarks point merely to the limitations on the usefulness of any one book for the problems which we have to face. They

do not in the smallest degree take away from the outstanding value of what Dr. Sykes has done in setting out the massive evidence in support of his own interpretation of the historical position of the Anglican Communion. For that we can be only profoundly grateful.

W. S.

BOOK REVIEW

"Old Priest and New Presbyter"

(*Old Priest and New Presbyter*, by Professor Norman Sykes; being the Gunning Lectures, Edinburgh 1953-54, and the Edward Cadbury Lectures, Birmingham, 1954-55; University Press, Cambridge)

Prof. Sykes' 270 page volume, about fifty percent of which consists of direct quotation from his authorities, will prove a perfect gold mine of information for all who wish to know the facts about the Anglican understanding of Episcopacy in the Church from the 16th century till the present day. With masterly skill, Dr. Sykes sets out the evidence both of the official pronouncements of the Church in the various stages of its history through these centuries, and of the teaching of its most illustrious Bishops, Archbishops and Theologians. Jewel, Hooker, Whitgift, Andrewes, Laud, Bancroft and many more are cited to build up the picture of the distinctive stand of *ecclesia anglicana* in the midst of the Churches of the Reformation. Their successors of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries receive equal attention.

The conclusions to which this weight of evidence inexorably drive us are, first, that there has been no deviation from the Anglican regard for episcopacy as the proper form of Church government and ministry, reverently received and used from the Early Church; but secondly, that any claim that the Church of England has regularly withheld all recognition from the ministry and sacraments in non-episcopal churches must break down on the indisputable facts of history. The evidence is built up from period to period. It includes the acceptance into the ministry of the Church of England of presbyterally ordained ministers from other lands, in the 17th century; the practice of "occasional conformity" and the willingness of Anglican divines to take communion abroad from non-episcopal ministers; the refusal to ordain afresh the parish ministers of Scotland when episcopacy was reintroduced into that country both in 1610 and in 1661; the century and more in India when the work of the SPCK was carried on by men who had a Lutheran ordination; and a great deal more. The whole story is consistent with the attitude taken up by the Lambeth Conference of 1908 which plainly contemplated the possibility of

Church Union, in which episcopacy would be accepted for the future administration of the Church, but in which an interim period would be expected during which ministers episcopally ordained and non-episcopally ordained would "enjoy equal status in all Synods and Councils of the United Church".

This book, of course, is heavily pre-occupied with the situation in England, and must therefore be supplemented before its lessons can be fully applied in another country. The English scene has peculiarities all its own, for there the National Church has been defending its position on the one hand against the criticism of Rome and on the other against the criticism of the various Free Churches which have asserted their differences from it. There too, the fact that the Reformation in England was carried through under the Monarch and with the episcopal succession intact, put the Church in a quite special position, and led to the remarkable emphasis on these features in the two fronted controversy to which we have referred.

Dr. Sykes shows that this fact was fully appreciated at many points in the history which he surveys, and a distinction was drawn between the attitude taken to other churches in England itself and to "foreign" churches. As regards the latter, even those who most strongly upheld episcopacy as the proper provision for the ministry of the Church recognised that in other circumstances it might well have been necessary to go on without it. They further recognised that in such circumstances this was entirely possible. What is not so fully faced, however, is the fact that in some of these churches the setting aside of episcopacy was regarded as not only possible and necessary but also as desirable. It is this fact, obtaining not just in "non-conformist" bodies within the territory of the Church of England, but upheld in other territories, which makes it doubtful if the problems can be wholly solved on the assumptions built up within one rather unusual national Church. And it is at this point that we certainly require more understanding of the thorough theological work done by men outside the special situation in England, e. g. men like Rutherford and Durham in Scotland, than is given in this book. Here too we have constantly to be alert to the very different

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